

# PHANTOM

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(also known as our cast of characters)

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\*contains adult language and situations. Reader discretion is advised.

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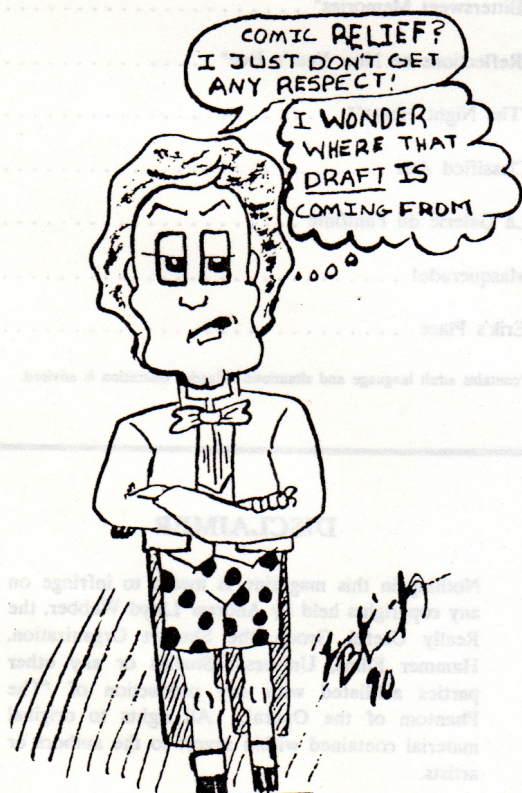


Allô! And welcome to the first or *La Gala Première* issue of **PHANTOM** magazine. Erik, Raoul and I are so glad you decided to join us.

This magazine is dedicated to the Phantom of the Opéra, ranging from Lon Chaney in the original 1925 immortal horror classic to Andrew Lloyd Webber's tragic love and romance musical.

We at MASQUE & ROSE, LTD. are attempting to produce a magazine for all Phantom fans alike. Since this magazine is for all productions, we openly welcome any and all "Phantom" experiences. So sit back, relax, and open our pages. We certainly hope you enjoy this new publication and sincerely hope to hear from all of you soon.

— Christine D.





# ME

Michael Patrick Alexander

When I gaze into the mirror,  
what is it I see?  
Reflections of what might  
have been,  
images of me.

I could be an architect,  
building structures to reach  
the sky.  
Beautiful, functional and  
pleasing to the eye.

I could be a musician,  
playing a symphony.  
I could play on my violin,  
a lovely Brahms melody.

I could be a teacher,  
mathematics are my skill.  
I could show the children math,  
they would have their fill.

I could be an Opéra star,  
my voice the golden gift.  
I could sing with a diva,  
and give her spirit a lift.

I could be a voice tutor,  
sharing my knowledge.  
I could teach the singing girls,  
who are now starting college.

I could be a composer,  
of operatic flair.  
I could write of a lonely  
man who lives inside his lair.

I could be a politician,  
one loved by all.  
Just, kind and rightly fair,  
never beginning to fall.

But what I have to be  
is what I am today.  
I am the wretched being,  
that's what they all say.



*Julia Blavett  
1990*



I am the lonely man who has  
to hide away.  
Never showing his awful face  
to the bright, sunlit day.

I am the loathsome beast who  
scares the girls,  
never to have loved.  
Desperately seeking the  
affections of one who lives above.

I am the insane musician,  
the dreaded Opéra Ghost.  
This is what I have to be,  
though it is what I hate the most.

People cannot bear my face,  
it is a hideous thing to see.  
Everywhere I have gone,  
they could not let me be.

Persecuted and abused,  
that was my fateful lot.  
Didn't they know I have feelings too,  
and that rejection hurt a lot?

Locked in a cage like a wild beast,  
was no fun and game.  
The fair owner's profit was  
based upon my shame.

I took my tithe and went free,  
the owners thought me dead.  
If they had known I was still alive,  
on a pike they would place my head.

So below the Opéra house,  
that is where I live.  
I treat the chorus girl so nice,  
I offer all I have to give.

I wish there was another reflection  
in the mirror I could see,  
But all the loathsome things I am,  
I have been and will always be.



Our apologies that this section isn't much.  
But then again, without any letters, this is what  
this section will look like unless each and every  
one of you writes us.

We are a fanzine and we need you!  
Each fan is important-- and needed! So please  
write us for the next issue. Without you, our  
loyal *patrons* and *souscripteurs*, we are nothing.

Help us make this magazine the very best  
it can be!

--J. Blewett  
Editor-in-chief  
&  
Christine D.

and me too!

Erik







Hi! You know me. I'm little Meg Giry, and this is my page. Here is where you can have fun without your parents knowing.

This page is totally un-serious, so go on, have some fun. I know you'll enjoy it!

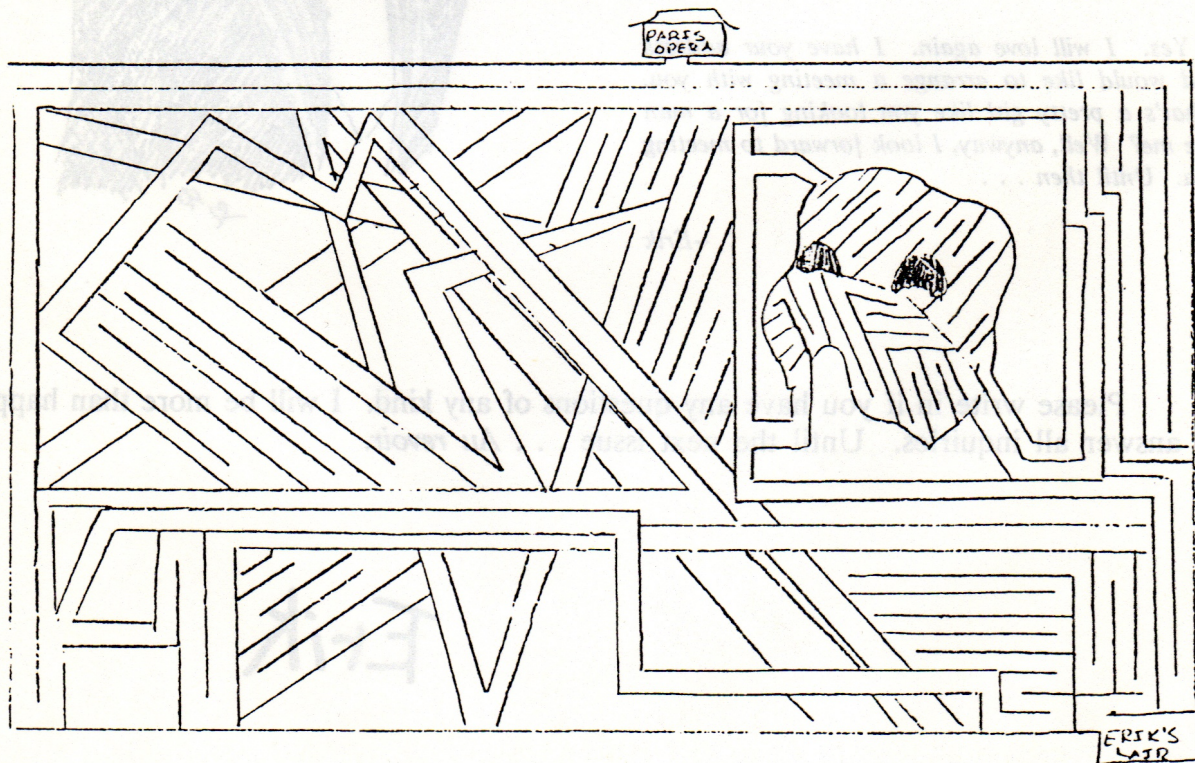
## THE PHANTOM'S WORD SEARCH

(Answer key can be found on page 30)

### WORD LIST

MASK	ALL I ASK OF YOU	LON CHANEY
PHANTOM	CHANDELIER	CLAUDE RAINS
ERIK	MUSIC OF THE NIGHT	HERBERT LOM
CHRISTINE	THINK OF ME	COLM WILKINSON
RAOUL	OPERA	MEG
LAIR	MICHAEL CRAWFORD	FIRMIN
BOAT	DAVE WILLETT	ANDRE
LAKE	JEFF KELLER	CAESAR
MUSIC	MARTIN SMITH	LABYRINTHS
CANDLES	CRIS GROENENDAAL	GRASSHOPPER
SCORPION	MADAME GYRY	MIRROR
VIOLIN	PARIS	ROSE
RED DEATH	TIMOTHY NOLAN	HAT

M D A F X A P B S C V I O L I N C G S M Y D O C A  
A A E Q M W H F B Z T A G I Y W U H X U C B T R C  
D V S S J Z A L L I A K E K S Q N F W G I Z O I S B  
A E I K M U N M L A K E K S Q N F W G I Z O I S B  
M W E G L D T R C P I B H C O Q Q V R C O V F R G  
E I P S N T O P E R A R T H D V R U A O V V F R G  
G L A S E W M R U V X U G R X J A Y S F X Z Q O J  
I L D W L V C D Y S F R O I N H N T S T S B U E E  
R E A O S A R T W B E F T S F C D C H H D D T N F  
Y T H I N K O F M E W L J T E I R F O E F F K E F  
G T V D O R H E P A X I P I Y X E D P N R J G N K  
K S L H B L G U R N M C E R N M U R P I L O O D E  
D E N E L O N C H A N E Y E Q K V A E G A R W A L  
S R C S K C L A U D E R A I N S I S R H B W Z A L  
Z I H U M E H M V M L D A W P Z E E P T Y X A L E  
T K Y P A N P A Z Y I F J O A O Q A P U R B H D R  
A F K H L Z Q F N W A R I D U N P C Z V I O L M O  
C I C D B O A T X D L C R R E L H A T F N A Y O S  
U I G I A G H I H K E I B O M L J K R A T K W H E  
M U S I C J G W V H O L I N R I B G N I H L Q P O  
D E L Q C O L M W I L K I N S O N M R N S O D E Y  
S B G U J Y D T I F J E Z E V M C G I Y J H A A L  
H E R B E R T L O M W S C O R P I O N X M K P J D  
M M A R T I N S M I T H Q E T U O P Q S G J R G Y  
W R T Y T I M O T H Y N O L E N R E D D E A T H M





# Dear Erik...

Dear Erik,

Have you ever done dance? My career could use a lift, too. She has had your attention. Can't I have it too?

--A Dancer

Dear Erik,

Are you bound to love again? I have a very big place in my heart just waiting for you. All you need do is claim it. I know the secret of the mask and I still desire your company with me. I have a nice house in the country that needs a talented, very special man to brighten the place. Are you interested?

--Alone and in love

Dear Alone,

Yes. I will love again. I have your address and would like to arrange a meeting with you. What's a pretty girl like you looking for a man like me? Well, anyway, I look forward to meeting you. Until then . . .

--Erik

Please write in if you have any questions of any kind. I will be more than happy to answer all inquiries. Until the next issue . . . *Au revoir.*

Erik

Dear Dancer,

No, I have not done dance on a professional basis, but I am willing to give tutoring a try. To get a hold of me, just look in the mirror in your dressing room. I shortly follow.

--Erik





## ♪ THE TUTOR ♪



I know not where he came from, or why he chose me. There are those more promising, those more deserving than I.

His voice is always kind to me. He is strict but never cruel. I wait for him eagerly, in my dressing room, until he calls my name.

With him, my voice is so different. I'm not sure the voice is mine.

I gave him my soul tonight, and told him I was dead. He replied, "Your soul is a beautiful thing, child. Not one emperor ever received such a gift."

As soon as I recovered, I hurried away, quietly anticipating the next day's lesson.

There was a time, long ago, when loneliness and despair were constant companions. A time when unfulfilled dreams and an unrequited love haunted and tormented me. A time when loneliness and longing left me yearning.

Now loneliness is conquered by a sense of belonging. The dreams hold hope and are bright. The future is within my grasp, and a desire to be happy and free is no longer a need.

## ♪ CHRISTINE ♪

I have a friend, a child named Christine, a ballet girl like me. She was so unsure of herself, that I had to persuade her to sing.

But then I told her, "I saw your face in the shadows. I watched you enter through doors. I heard your voice in the darkness but the words weren't yours."

I worry about the girl, the tales she tells about the voice. "An Angel of Music, her guide and guardian, calling her softly, hiding somewhere in her room."

The poor girl is sick, since her Papa died. She hears things from all around. Ah, but what can I say? Let the girl live her fantasies, let her love her Phantom at play.

Things will be okay.



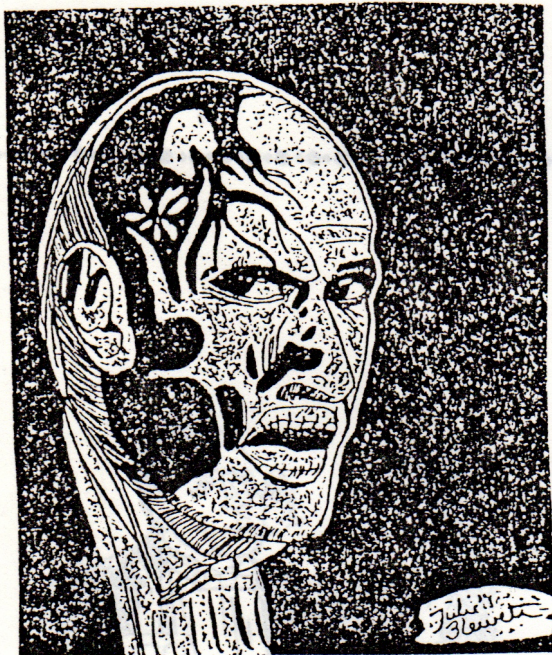


## ♪ ♪ A ROSE ♪ ♪

There was a time when my life was lonely and lacked purpose. A time when no-one knew about the pain I carried in my heart. A time when dreams were meaningless and the future unpredictable, when emptiness and heartbreak were my only companions. That was until he came.

Now my life is filled with him and purpose fills my time. Music is all I desire and my dreams are full and realistic. My future is bright and secure. My heart's emptiness is replaced by gaiety and the thrill of hearing him again. I want for only him, his music and his wonderful voice.

I had a very special man, or angel, enter my life.



## ♪ ♪ A MASK ♪ ♪

A.V. Steele

There was a time, long ago when loneliness and despair were constant companions. A time where unfulfilled dreams and an unaccessible future haunted and leered at me. A time when emptiness and longing left me yearning for something . . . for someone. Then, there she was.

Now loneliness is conquered by a sense of belonging. The dreams hold hope and are bright. The future is within my grasp, and a desirable one it is. The emptiness is replaced by happiness and joy, and there is no want, no need.

A special, very special person has entered my life.

## COSTUMES, COSTUMES

Costumes play a major role in today's theatre arts. How do costumers come up with the designs for the shows? In the musical production of *Phantom*, each cast member has approximately seven costume changes. How do they come up with so many designs? Have you ever wondered why 'The Phantom' wears a white tie instead of the customary black one? Have you ever wondered why 'Piangi' wears a suit like an Italian shoe salesman? Write in and give us your ideas. Next issue promises to have some interesting comments and answers.



## AUDIO REVIEW

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>With Love</i> Michael Crawford</p> <p>A beautiful collection of songs. Crawford's voice improvement makes this album extra-special. Highlights: The Story of My Life, I Dreamed a Dream, With You I'm Born Again, If and Music of the Night. <i>Telestar</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Stage Heroes</i> Colm Wilkinson</p> <p>A collection of songs from Broadway shows. Highlights: The Phantom of the Opera, Music of the Night and Bring Him Home. <i>BMG</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Songs That Got Away</i> Sarah Brightman</p> <p>Sarah's voice perfectly compliments these songs. Highlights: Meadowlark, Dreamers, Chi Il Del Sogno, Di Doretta, Half a Moment. <i>Polydor</i></p>
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### THE KISS

I could not stay with him, and I believe he knew this also. I would grow weak and die. But I could not leave him the way he was, with pure loving tears in his eyes. He hid his inner anguish with cries of hate. My beloved, caught in his trap. He said if I did not choose between them Raoul's life would end in a snap. I saw his pain and grief. There was something I had to do. I walked up to him calmly, his distorted face in full view. I put my arms around him. He was in painful bliss. I completely broke down his walls with a simple kiss.

"Take her, forget me. Forget what you have seen. Tell none what you know. Don't tell of this thing." Raoul took me from the Phantom's lair in the boat from which I first came. Behind I could hear the cries of a man whole and sane. "I love you," he cries, and I feel a lump in my throat. I hear his remorse echoing around me as we cross the murky moat. I see him wave to us, and I cry out back to him, "I love you too, my Angel, my tutor and my friend." As we reach the other side, I see him no more. He has vanished from the other shore.

As I reflect upon it, I think now I would have stayed. Raoul is kind but I'll never find a man like that again.





## A FACE IN THE MIRROR

J. Blewett

Night encompassed the world of the people in the world above the Paris Opéra. However, darkness reigned supreme below the Gothic building, where only candlelight pierced the inky gloom. This underworld, full of labyrinths, caverns and a reservoir, was home to a man who dared not turn his face to the dawn. He feared not to bear his face to the warmth of the sun. Why? Humility. Men called him a monster, a freak, a beast. Women merely fainted or shied away, appalled and disgusted. Erik fled a glance into the small mirror he held in his hands. A curse of nature, laughing bitterly at him, was what he felt his face to be.

"God? Is there any way to save me from this hideous curse . . . this hideous face? Are you laughing at my anguish . . . or crying for my pain? Lord in Heaven, I pray to you, end my suffering and torment. Please, let it all end. I have carried this burden for so long and I am weary. Please, let me die . . . or . . . let me . . . love. Damn you, you horrible gargoyle," Erik cried, hurtling the mirror across the bedroom.

"Why couldn't I have been handsome? Why can't people accept me for what I am, not what I look like? I am no less than any other. What have I been given? A beautiful voice. Ah, but what is the good of a beautiful voice if none can bear the mouth it comes from? Is there any other existence, reason, or purpose for my being? Surely I was not born solely for the amusement of others. If that is your purpose, O Lord, give me a sign. Please give me a sign, and soon my God, before it's too late."

Erik sat on the settee by his bed and waited. He soon grew weary.

"Ah, I see! Of course. You wouldn't give me any reassurance or hope. I am not a wicked man! Why can't you give me any peace of mind? A sense of belonging? I am an extremely lonely, middle-aged man who has never known happiness. Never tasted love. Never felt joy. Can't you grant me security? No, I guess not . . ."

Erik cut himself off as he heard a sound floating down from the Opéra. A sweet soprano, soft and clear as spring rain, gliding through the air like a sweet memory. He cocked his head.

"Can it be? A sign? That voice . . . so

heavenly and perfect . . . so much so, that it must be a sign. Thank you, Lord! I shall not deny you again. I have not heard that voice before! I must go find its mistress."

The corridors rang with the echoes of Erik's footsteps as he hastened to his hiding place, where he could see all the stage. He gazed intently, seeking all for the owner of the voice. He scanned the women, and none emitted the voice he had heard. Then, he heard her again. Erik was shocked to see whose voice it was. A small, dark-haired girl, a member of the *corps de ballet*, was singing, half to herself, half to whomever would listen. She was not beautiful like La Sorelli, but she had a voice that melted Erik's heart.

"That tiny girl? Who could she be? She is not new, but I have never heard her sing before. I must find out! Madame Giry should know."

♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

"Monsieur, her name is Christine. Christine Daaé. She is little Meg's friend. She has promise as a singer, ah, but the managers aren't as bright as you, monsieur."

"Thank you, Madame Giry. Your rewards will be most generous."

"I am pleased to help, monsieur. You are always so kind to me and Meg. I'll do all I can to help you."

"Thank you, Madame Giry. That is all I ask of you now. Good day."

Erik left a tin of English sweets on the rail for the woman. She was very fond of her sweets, and regarded them almost divine. Erik followed the girl called Christine to her dressing room. A corridor ran directly behind it and he could see her through the special mirror. She seemed half-tranced as she changed. Erik listened intently as Christine talked to no one.

"Father? Where is the angel you promised to send? Where is the Angel of Music? You said you'd send him to me when you were in Heaven. I miss you so much, Papa. I miss your violin, playing the Swedish melodies I was so fond of when I was a child. Father, if you can hear me, give me a sign that the Angel is on his way."

Erik saw at once the opportunity to gain the girl's friendship and develop her voice so as to replace the wonderful, but unkind, Carlotta Giudicelli. Nervously, he spoke to her.

"I am here, my child."



"Father?" she said, startled.

"No, but he sends his love. I am the Angel of Music, and your father sent me to you, Christine. You have a pure voice, and it is my duty to see that it gains the recognition it deserves . . . and desires. I am to be with you every single day, guarding you and instructing you. One day, Christine Daaé, you will usurp Carlotta Giudicelli as diva of this Opéra. You have a gift from God, and it is my task to see that you use it to the best of your abilities. You sing like a nightingale, and what a lovely bird you are, child. I must warn you: I am a very strict tutor. You must devote all your concentration to your art. Music is your master, and you are master of the music. You will sing to make the angels in Heaven weep. Are you willing for this kind of devotion?"

"Yes . . . yes, master. Angel, grant me your glory. Make my Papa proud of me. I shall give you my soul!"

"Your soul is a beautiful thing, child. Do not give it so freely to just anyone. And your father is already proud of you. You can only make him beam with happiness. I shall be here tomorrow at 8 a.m. sharp. Do not be tardy! I will not tolerate any lack of punctuality!"

"You will tutor me here? In my dressing room?"

"The acoustics are adequate, and as there are very few souls here that early in the morning, our sessions will be undisturbed. You are to talk to no-one about my visits or I shall leave and never return. These are my terms. Do you accept?"

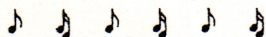
"Oh, yes, Angel. I shall be here promptly at 8 o'clock. Thank you, Angel, and will you say hello to Papa for me?" Christine asked, her big blue eyes staring innocently.

"Yes, sweet Christine. I shall tell your father everything. Until tomorrow. Remember your sacred oath. Not a soul may know!"

"Of course, Angel. I listen and obey."

Erik stared at the girl, barely over twenty, and felt longingly in love.

"Since the moment I first heard your voice, I knew we were meant to be together. It has begun. I shall love someone at long last."



Erik's relationship with Christine grew immensely. She devoted all her waking hours to her art and the Angel and ceased only when she was performing. Her triumph was when Carlotta



fell "ill". The child knew not that it was a rather ominous note sent by her master that had caused Carlotta to fall ill. That, and the minor incident of a backdrop falling during her aria which succeeded in cutting her off from half her cast. The Opéra Ghost was blamed. Erik knew he had to take the blame in order to get the respect he demanded. Christine sang the aria with a clarity never before experienced by anyone in the Opéra.

Everyone was enthralled by her performance, especially the young Raoul, Vicomte de Chagny, whom Christine had known as a girl in the countryside near Perros-Guirec.

After Christine's brilliant Gala triumph, Raoul, escorted by the managers, Armand Moncharmin and Firmin Richard, hurried to the dressing room where Christine was resting.

"Christine Daaé! Where is your red scarf?"

"I beg your pardon, monsieur?"

"Where is your red scarf? Don't tell me you've lost it after I got so sopping wet chasing it into the sea!"

"Raoul? It is you! How have you





been?"

"Lonely without you, Christine. I have so much to tell you. Let us go to supper."

"I can't, Raoul," she said cautiously. "I must wait for my tutor."

"Surely he won't mind giving you up for just one evening!"

"I don't know. He is very strict!"

"And I will die without you by my side tonight. You have to get dressed and I have to get my hat and gloves. I shall be back in two minutes," he said as he whisked out the door.

"Wait! Raoul!" she called after him, to no avail. "Things have changed, Raoul."

Erik, as was his way, heard all of this conversation. He had to make his move now or risk losing her to that young fool!

"That insolent boy! I will not spare you for one evening!"

"Angel, speak and I will listen."

"Come to the mirror, Christine. Do not fear it. Come to me, Angel of Music."

"Who is that in there? Christine? Whose voice is that? Christine!"

The mirror slid open and Erik held his hand out to the child.

"Do not fear me. Come, and I will show you all the wonders of Heaven."

Erik took her hand firmly but ever so gently, so as not to hurt her. She gasped slightly as she felt the coolness of his touch.

"I am sorry for the deception, child, but it was the only way at the time. I had to make the world know your voice. I love you, Christine, and you must love me, too, for I cannot live without your love."

Christine did not resist or panic. She

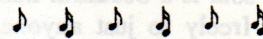
went with the Master of the Voice, the Voice of the Angel, who was not an angel, but a man. Erik led her down through the tunnels, across the lake and to his lair, a house on the lake.

"This is where I live. Do not fear, Christine. I shall never harm you."

The room was adorned with flowers, candles and a huge pipe organ. Christine looked around intently. Erik showed her to her room. It was elegant in its simplicity.

"This room is yours and yours alone. I shall never enter it. It is where your privacy shall never be interfered with."

Erik left her and Christine fell into a sleep, partially induced by her triumph, partially by the music produced by a music box with the figure of a monkey playing the cymbals and wearing Persian robes. Christine gazed wearily at the box before drifting off. Erik looked in on her once before going to sleep himself. The beautiful child was with him at last.



In the morning, Christine was woken by the sound of the great organ in the main hall. She opened the door and saw Erik playing passionately. She moved towards him.

"What is that you are playing?" she inquired.

"It is my *Don Juan Triumphant*. I compose sometimes. When I finish this . . . well, I shan't discuss that right now."

"I am going to freshen up now, Erik. I won't be long."

But Christine did not go to freshen up. She had a desire to see beneath the mask; to see the face of the voice! She quietly went up behind Erik and attempted to pull the mask away. Several times she tried, and each time Erik turned at the last minute and stopped her. She decided to go freshen up, and when she was through she snuck up behind him and triumphantly snatched the mask from his face. He whirled around angrily.

"Damn you! Damn you! Look at me! Look . . . you wanted to see! Glut your soul on this accursed face!"

Erik dropped to the floor and began weeping.

"I am not laughing now. I am crying for you, Christine."

Christine never looked horrified or frightened. She simply said,

"I know you."



"What did you say?"

"I know who you are!"

"How . . . where . . . what . . .?" Erik stammered.

"Do you remember the fair at Perros?"

"Y-yes. But what does that . . .?"

"Shhh. Do you remember the tiny Swedish girl who sang like an angel and her father who was thought, by most, to be the best violinist in the world?"

"Yes, but I still . . ."

"I was that little girl! 'Little Lotte' was the name my Papa gave me. My hair has turned dark, but I surely thought that you would know me at first glance."

"I remember! You always visited me and brought me meat and bread. Oh, Christine!"

Christine and her long-lost friend embraced and cried, and remained happy together . . . forever.

How much do you really know about Erik?  
How much would you like to know?

After much intimate research, I have discovered Erik's vital statistics. They are as follows:

NAME: Erik Charren

AGE: 47

Ht: 6'3"

Wt: 159 lbs.

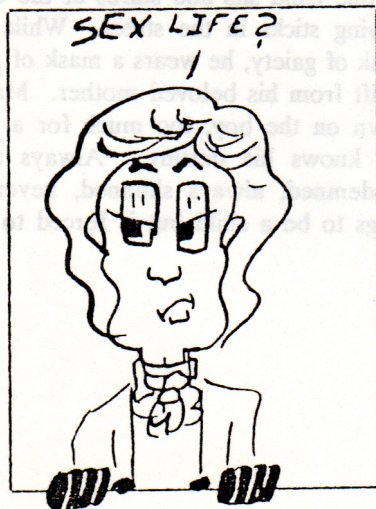
HAIR: Dark Brown

EYES: Golden yellow

APPEARANCE: No cartilage development in the nose; jaundice as a child; premature hair loss and a thin, gaunt overall appearance, hence the skeletal features.

There you go! Next issue, I'll discuss Raoul's sex life. Until then,

--Christine D.



## SHATTERED DREAMS

*Michael Patrick Alexander*

Searching through the fragments  
of my shattered dreams,  
I come across the memories of  
things that might have been.

Places the two of us could go,  
just waiting to be seen.  
The jagged, rustic mountains,  
a crystal lake's glassy sheen.

We could visit cities!  
London, Vienna and Rome.  
Once we had finished we  
would be happy to come home.

We could see America's  
countrified, majestic air.  
The beautiful new countryside  
and its pleasant springtide air.

All this could be done  
on our honeymoon.  
Happier than any other  
bride or lucky groom.

I could make you happier than  
any woman on Earth.  
With you my life was freed  
and I enjoyed a second birth.

We could have a house  
in the countryside.  
With a picket fence and all,  
and a garden, if I tried.

I feel a very sharp pain,  
as I get cut on a dream.  
Remembering the things that  
never could have been.



# Bittersweet Memories

A COLLECTION OF POETRY BY

*Julie Blewett*



## ♪ ♪ GARGOYLE ♪ ♪

Cold, stone statue atop the building? Gothic beauty or repulsive sculpture? None are he. The man who moves with the shadows, and is one acquainted with the night. Flesh and blood is this creature, who desires no less than any other. Stone masks his features so that none may see this statue, made living by one greater than he. Content is he, to sit above the city and watch the world go by.

## ♪ ♪ THE ROSE ♪ ♪

Her name fell from his lips, a sweet melody. She was his Angel. His child bride. He traced in his mind the lines of her face. So guileless, she, and full of grace, and innocence. He slipped from the shadows and lingered in her dressing room for but a moment. A note of love and a single blood-red rose, the only profession of his deepest emotions.

## ♪ ♪ THE LONGING ♪ ♪

A lone child sits and stares at the other children playing sticks in the street. While they wear a mask of gaiety, he wears a mask of *papier mâché*, a gift from his beloved mother. Maturity weighs down on the boy, too much for a child his age. He knows his destiny. Always alone, always condemned, always shunned, never loved. He longs to be a child but is forced to be a man.



# REFLECTIONS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE MASQUERADE BALL, THE PARIS OPÉRA POPULAIRE - DECEMBER 31, 1882

Philia Atlantis

The scene was one of mad revelry and delight.

New Year's Eve in Paris was always a night of merriment--in ancient buildings that had stood for centuries; in modern, glittering structures built in more recent years; in the dim, narrow alleyways of the old city; on the broad new boulevards of Baron Haussman that stretched in stunning vistas to the horizon. Revelers were already in the streets. The *bistros* and *cafés* were packed. Gaily colored boats, loaded with merry-makers, plied their way up and down the Seine.

One of the liveliest scenes in the City of Light was in the lavish foyer of the Paris Opéra. The occasion was the annual New Year's Eve masquerade ball. Fantastically costumed dancers were twirling madly about the floor; others, just as garishly clad, watched the dancers from the landings and balconies.

In a nearby side foyer, the Opéra managers, M. Richard Firmin and M. Gilles André, were receiving the best wishes and congratulations of friends and subscribers before a table lavishly spread with refreshments. In the adjoining room was yet another reception hosted by the Opéra's reigning diva, Signora Carlotta Giudicelli.

Firmin and André exchanged a glance and a smile. So far, the evening was going quite well. The benefit performance earlier in the day had been a splendid occasion. The ball itself promised to be a dazzling event.

Beneath his Spanish inquisitor's biretta, Firmin furrowed his brow slightly as he sipped a glass of fine Vouvray. He was remembering last year's ball and the sudden appearance of Red Death.

The Phantom. Firmin would never forget that spectral intruder, that mysterious occupant of the distant, dark cellars far below. When he and André had purchased the business from M. Lefèvre a year and a half ago, they had been told of the nameless, shadowy personage who called himself the 'Opéra Ghost', who was paid a 'salary' of 20,000 francs a month and demanded exclusive use of Box 5 on the Grand Tier. Firmin and André had laughed. Ridiculous!



But it had ceased being ridiculous the night Joseph Buquet died. Simply an accident, Firmin kept telling himself. However, the Ghost had laid low for six months after that night.

Then, on this very night, one year ago, that strange, mysterious person had appeared without warning--had just materialized on the staircase. A weird sight in his scarlet costume, the Phantom had stalked stiffly down the stairs towards them, bearing, in his hands, a large bound volume. Throwing the book at them, he announced he had written an opera, which they were to present. And then summoning Christine Daaé over to him, the intruder had ripped a chain from her neck and vanished right before their eyes!

They presented the opera, *Don Juan Triumphant*. A strange work, André had said--quite unlike anything he'd ever heard before. Christine had, at first, refused to sing the lead role, which the Phantom demanded be given to her. Persuaded by the Vicomte, she relented to assist them in their plans to either capture or kill the mystery man.

Firmin could never forget the night of the first performance of *Don Juan Triumphant*. It was the night Ubaldo Piangi had been murdered. They *had* been prepared. All the doors had been secured. The police had the building surrounded. The marksman had been waiting in the orchestra



pit. Yet still the monster had defied them--had shown himself right on the stage!

Firmin had gasped in amazement when the hooded figure began to sing, "You have come here . . ." He had known instantly that it was not Piangi who stood on the stage below. The tenor voice was beautiful, but definitely not Piangi's. André and the Vicomte had also realized the substitution, for they had shot straight up in their chairs. The marksman, too, had been aware of it but could only shrug and shake his head at them. He dared not fire for fear of hitting Christine Daaé. So they had to sit, tense and helpless, as the Phantom sang, grasping Christine's hands and running his own hands brazenly over her all the while. The young diva, realizing her plight, looked around frantically for the Vicomte. His tight-lipped smile seemed to give her courage and she took up the song, passionately singing the words the Phantom had written just for her. Firmin had watched and listened with growing outrage as Christine had continued to sing, especially as he witnessed the lewd, obscene gestures the hooded figure was making with his hands. He would go down to the stage and strangle the creature himself if the marksman did not fire soon.

As the singers completed their song, Christine reached out towards the figure and pushed the hood from his head. Firmin had, of course, known who had stood in Piangi's place, yet he had still been stunned at the sight of the pale face, half-covered by the white mask; the thick lips of the distorted mouth; the slick, dark

hair. The Phantom had seemed shaken by Christine's action and backed hastily away from her. Then, suddenly, to Firmin's surprise, the Phantom had begun to sing, very tenderly, to the young diva: "Say you'll share with me one love, one lifetime . . ." Firmin had been startled and almost touched by the pleading entreaty in that glorious voice as he stared at the masked man on the far side of the stage. The marksman must have been mesmerized for he had not yet fired at the Phantom, even though he was, at that moment, some distance from Christine. Then, as his voice soared in a magnificent crescendo--"Anywhere you go, let me go too."--the Phantom hastened towards Christine, his hands held out beseechingly--"Christine, that's all I ask of . . ." Before the Phantom could even utter the last word, Christine Daaé had violently torn away the white mask.

Even now, Firmin still saw, in his nightmares, the hideous, twisted flesh that disfigured the right side of the Phantom's face. Never had he imagined that such a travesty of human countenance could exist. The filmed right eye, the misshapen nose, the deathly white skin, the deformed skull, the grossly swollen lips--the manager had seen all of these, but they paled beside the raw-looking, angry red cords of scar tissue that made up the pitiful creature's right cheek.

Staring transfixed at that horrible sight, Firmin had barely heard the crack of the marksman's rifle as he finally fired or Meg Giry's wild scream. Only when the unmasked monster grabbed Christine and vanished had he aroused himself and hurried down to the stage with André and the Vicomte. Carlotta had also run onto the stage, screaming, "What is it? What has happened?" Only then had they all seen what Meg had revealed behind the curtain--the garrotted body of Ubaldo Piangi.

Firmin hadn't remembered much of what happened after that. He had screamed, "We're ruined, André! We're ruined!" He faintly recalled the tumult in the audience, Piangi's body being carried away, the hysterical Carlotta being led out by a group of her fellow artists. At the time, he didn't even see the ballet mistress, Madame Giry, approach the Vicomte and order him to follow her. Only later--several weeks later, in fact--had he a letter from the Vicomte, posted from London, England, enlightening him as to the later events of that fateful evening.

Madame Giry, it seemed, had known of the Phantom for several years. Indeed, Firmin





had tried several times to pry information from her about their unwanted guest. He knew that whenever the Phantom wanted a message brought to them, it was Madame Giry who brought it. She seemed to know something about the man's history and had warned the managers not to arouse the wrath of the mysterious Ghost. That night, as chaos reigned on the stage, she had gone to the Vicomte and begged him to follow her.

She had led him, the Vicomte related in his letter, to the shore of the vast underground lake deep below the cellars of the Opéra. Swimming to an underground house beyond the dark waters, the Vicomte found Christine the prisoner of the embittered Phantom. Raoul de Chagny had informed them that the deformed man was a genius who had been Christine's voice instructor. He had conceived a mad passion for the girl and was attempting to force her to stay beneath the Opéra with him. The Vicomte briefly outlined what had happened:

"The insane musician, catching my neck in his Punjab lasso, had offered her [Christine] a choice: 'Spend your life with me, and I will free your lover. Refuse me and he dies.'

Then, to save my life, Christine embraced the Phantom and kissed him. The sight utterly turned my stomach but it seemed to crush the Phantom. The disfigured creature removed the lasso from my neck and told us to leave, making us promise never to tell what we knew of him. We left quickly in the Phantom's boat only after Christine returned the ring the Phantom had given her. As we left, we heard the Phantom weeping pitifully and the sound of the mob approaching. Needless to say, we did not linger. We didn't even stay behind to investigate the mad tumult that was still proceeding in the corridors and foyers of the Opéra. We went directly to my carriage and fled. We stopped at a village church in the morning, were wed, and then left France for London that very day."

Firmin did remember some of the aftermath at the Opéra. Amidst all the confusion, a mob of stagehands, dancers, chorus members, firemen—even a few subscribers—all led by Meg Giry, had taken off for the cellars in a state of vengeful rage, determined to track down the Phantom and tear him to pieces. Meg had told them later, when summoned by the managers, what had happened. The howling mob had followed Meg down through the levels of the Opéra, no doubt expecting to find Christine Daaé the helpless victim of the insane creature. Instead, they had seen only the Phantom as they came into sight of his underground lair, walking slowly towards his throne, weeping; his shoulders

trembling and his horrible face streaked with tears. As they burst into his lair, he wrapped his cloak around him, seated himself on the throne and simply vanished before their eyes. Meg had picked up his half-mask, which he had inexplicably left behind. There had been no sign of Christine. The mob had torn apart the lair trying to find either Christine or the Phantom.

Madame Giry had told Firmin and André what she knew of the Phantom's unfortunate past. His name, they had learned, was Erik. A talented architect, he had been one of Garnier's sub-contractors when the Opéra was built. It was at that time he had built the underground house on the lake for himself. He was a composer, a violinist, and a singer with a voice of great beauty. He was also a ventriloquist and a master magician. Madame Giry told them that Erik had been born with his horrible deformity and had spent several years, prior to his work on the Opéra, as a freak on display in a traveling fair. Firmin had felt a twinge of pity as the ballet mistress related how the pathetic deformed genius had been beaten and abused by the owners of the fair. What a tragedy. The man was really possessed of a brilliant mind. He composed music unlike any ever heard, he sang like an angel from Heaven, and his designs for the Opéra, it was clear, had been both beautiful and functional. What a pity the poor fellow had been cursed with such a fate.

The Vicomte's letter, received a week later, had reassured them that Christine was safe and out of the Phantom's reach. But of the Phantom himself, they found no trace. He had disappeared. Several times, groups of stagehands and firemen had descended to the ruins of the Phantom's lair, trying to find him, but finding nothing. After about a month, they finally gave it up. The Opéra more or less returned to normal. Box 5 was rented with no trouble. Piangi's dressing room was cleared of his personal effects and then locked. Carlotta went on an extended leave of absence.

For nearly three months, they had been almost without a leading soprano. With Carlotta away and Christine on her honeymoon with her new husband, the two star singers of the Opéra Populaire were absent. When the de Chagnys had returned to Paris, after André had assured them in a letter that the Phantom was, apparently, gone for good, the Vicomtesse had sung three or four performances. The Vicomte had let the managers know, that in no uncertain terms, did he have any intention of permitting his wife to



continue her stage career. He had allowed her to fill in temporarily, but only as a favor to them. Christine was now a noblewoman, not an opera singer. At first, the managers had been perturbed, but now, Firmin was rather grateful for the Vicomte's decision, as Christine's voice seemed to have lost its splendor. Fortunately, Carlotta returned soon after, and she now reigned supreme at the Opéra Populaire.

That is, she had reigned until very recently. Firmin pondered the situation of the past month as he nursed his glass of champagne. Another blazing new star had appeared--in the same manner as Christine Daaé. From among the chorus girls, another promising young singer had arisen.

Firmin shook his head and studied the champagne at the bottom of his glass. Who would have ever thought that little Meg Giry had it in her?

André caught his eye and nodded towards the door. The de Chagnys were arriving. Their most unctuous smiles in place, the managers of the Opéra Populaire went to greet their patrons.

♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

"The Vicomte and Vicomtesse de Chagny!"

All eyes in the foyer of the Opéra turned as the arrival of the Vicomte and Vicomtesse was announced. The young couple entered, Christine on Raoul's arm, to murmurs of approval and envy.

Raoul was as handsome as ever--just as blond, just as noble. He was perfectly turned out as a gentleman from the Court of Louis XIV. Christine, at his side, was richly clad in a lavish gown of the same era. Beautiful, and rather pale, she smiled slightly as the managers bowed low to herself and her husband.

... to be continued

Whose box is this?

\* Box 5 \*

## THE NIGHT HEART

Kathleen Faust

The lights of downtown New York shone brightly on a cool April night. The spattering of rain on the sidewalks added to the rhythm of the city. In the rain, the pavement gleamed like silver, hot neon flooding the streets in a rainbow explosion of color. A lone figure walked down the streets, oblivious to the sights and sounds of the city. Kaisty McKellen wormed her way down the slickened avenues of the Big Apple. Her fiery red hair hung limp around her face and her mascara had darkened her eyes. She had been promised a modeling job at one of the most prestigious fashion companies, and they turned her out. Damn them all to hell, she thought. I'm gonna make something of myself no matter what my old man did. No one's gonna stop me. I can be anything I damn well wanna be!

Kaisty stopped and looked around. Nothing familiar caught her eye. She had wandered into a bad area of town. She quickly turned around and tried to retrace her steps, but to no avail. She had no idea of where she was. She noticed a small gang of hoodlums eyeing her and she quickened her pace. Get to a police station, she told herself. You can catch a cab there. Just find one and fast, sister.

The gang, who had been pursuing her, caught up to Kaisty at last.

"Where you goin', sweet thing?"

"The opposite direction you are, slimebag."

The gang leader ran his greasy hand through Kaisty's hair.

"Oh, the bitch has got some kinda language. Don'tcha know young ladies ain't suppos'ta use words like that, sweetie pie?"

"Screw you!" Kaisty spat.

"Shaddap, whore! I betcha you like somethin'. You look like one of those modeling sluts I see all the time in *Playboy*. I bet I got something you want, bitch."

"Oh, God! Please, no!"

"I ain't God, but I'm gonna show you a piece of Heaven you ain't never seen before."

The gang dragged Kaisty into an alley and tore her clothes off.

"C'mon, sweet thing. Gimme all you got, an' then some. Don't that feel good?"

"Oh, God! Help meeee!"



"I told you to shut up, f---in' whore!"

The gang leader slapped Kaisty hard in the face. She groaned and fell silent. Each man took his turn in raping the helpless woman. The leader zipped his fly up and pulled out a machete.

"Say bye-bye, bitch. You were a good f--- but nothin' else. But now let me shorten your neck a bit."

"Get away from her," growled a voice.

"What the f---? You'd better back off, man, or I'll kill you after I waste the whore."

"I said get away from her, street scum."

"You brave asshole. Cutter, Arson, get the S.O.B.!"

"Damn straight!"

The two thugs came towards the shadowy figure. The one called Cutter came after the figure with a switchblade. The shadow deftly stepped aside and reeled Cutter a devastating blow to the throat. Blood caked in Cutter's mouth as he fell to the alley floor, gurgling. Arson came after the figure and flung throwing stars towards him. The shadow dropped to the pavement and swept Arson's leg out from under him. He picked up a star and impaled it into the oppressor's neck. A knife sailed through the air and caught the shadow in the shoulder. He calmly pulled the blade from his arm and sent it back the way it came with amazing speed and force. It caught the third member of the gang in the groin and the impact sent the man sprawling.

"What the f--- are you, man?"

"Your worst nightmare, sewer child," the voice whispered.

There was a whistle of something sailing through the air. The noose landed over the gang leader's head and with a flick of the shadow's wrist, the lasso tightened around the neck and strangled the last hoodlum. The figure went over to where the girl lay unconscious. She had been raped at least five times and she was severely beaten. He pulled her to him and draped her limp form over his shoulders, and then vanished as quickly as he had appeared.

♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

Kaisty awoke feeling very sore and violated . . . filthy. She tried to piece the events together and shuddered when she realized what had happened to her. She had been raped and beaten. She wanted to crawl under a rock and die. She felt dirty and like a whore. She felt a bandage on her cheek, and underneath the bandage were stitches. Only then did she stop to

take a look at her surroundings. She was in a very lavish apartment, all the decor being done in blacks, greys and subdued pastels. She looked down. She didn't have on the tattered remains of her dress. Instead, she wore a silk and lace gown, flourishing and beautiful. She heard breathing behind her. She flew around and saw the imposing man in black.

"Good morning," he said. "I trust you are doing better?"

He wore a black tails tuxedo and a hat hid his face.

"Who the hell are you? Where am I? What happened?"

"You are in my apartment. You were attacked two nights ago in the lower West Bronx. You have suffered a great emotional shock. Those who violated you have been . . . eradicated."

He said the word 'eradicated' with contempt and disgust.

"What are you going to do with me?" Kaisty asked.

"Help you get well again so you can move on with your life and forget all about those punks . . . and me."

"You saved me?"

"I couldn't just stand by and watch them rape you. They would have killed you if I had not intervened when I did. Too bad I only sustained a minor wound."

"What do you mean 'too bad' you only had 'minor wounds'?"

"I wish to die, but that is neither your fault nor your problem. If you are hungry, which I am certain you are, I will fix breakfast for you."

"I'd like that very much . . . Mr. . . ."

"I go by no last name. You may call me 'Erik'. I am simply Erik."

"Thank you, Erik. I'm Kaisty."

"Yes. I know. I searched your purse for identification. You may shower if you feel you need cleansing."

"I was hoping you'd say that. I feel so filthy and dirty!"

"The shower is in there, the first door on the right. Clean clothes are on the hamper for you. Mind that cut on your face. We don't want the stitches to come out."

Kaisty hastened to the bathroom. She felt uneasy about everything that had happened. The bastards who had raped her and, then, this shadowy man in black who had saved her life and wished that his would end. The apartment was dark so she never got a good look at his face,



which he kept well-hidden anyway. Yet, despite all that had happened, Kaisty's inner voice told her she could trust the man who called himself Erik. She began to take off her gown when she happened to look into the mirror. A horrified cry escaped her throat. A second later, the man in black was at her side.

"What is it? What is wrong?"

"My face," she sobbed. "What did they do to my face?"

She slid to the floor and began crying.

"My face. Now I can never work again.

No one wants a patchwork model."

"Kaisty. Listen to me," he said. "The way I stitched that cut up, there will be no scar and the bruises and cuts will be gone in a few days. Even if you were scarred, you could go on."

"How would you know?"

"Believe me, I know," Erik said, tilting his head so she could see the mask that covered the right half of his face. "I have been able to go on. So can you. You are welcome here as long as you wish and so long as you don't touch my mask."

"Thank you."

Erik left Kaisty and she timidly got up and looked into the mirror again. Her eyes were black and puffy, bluish-purple bruises adorned both cheeks and bite marks spotted her neck and shoulders. Her lip was enlarged and tender. Her body bore similar marks. She let the gown slip to the floor and stepped into the shower. The hot water cascaded down her torso, helping to soothe the stiff and aching muscles. Soap and a washcloth helped rinse the physical remains of the brutal attack but the mental remains would take much longer to wash away.

Erik removed his hat and mask, setting both down on his bed. He stiffly tugged off his tails coat and waistcoat. Gleaming red shone on the white shirt in the place he had been stabbed. He grimaced in pain as he removed his shirt.

"Oh, God! You're hurt!"

"Don't look at me!" Erik cried. "Don't look!"

Erik fell to the bed and hid from her sight. She walked up and sat down by his prone form. She picked up the white mask lying beside her and slid it over his face from behind.

"You took care of me, now let me take care of you. Let me see that wound!"

Erik slowly turned around to give her access to the wound but turned his head away from her.

"Great. You've let this thing get infected. Do you have any alcohol?"

Erik told her where she could find the alcohol. Making him lie down on the bed, she poured the germicide into his wound. She knew he was in pain yet he didn't even flinch. Probing into the puncture, she made sure that the alcohol did its purpose. Then she put an ointment on the gauze pad and bandaged it tightly. She rested her hands on his shoulders.

"Why didn't you take better care of the wound?"

"I cannot kill myself. I wish someone else would take my life and grant me peace."

"Why do you talk like that? Why do you want to die?"

"This mask has been on my face as long as I can remember. I want freedom from it."

"Why don't you take it off?"

"People weren't able to accept me in my century, what makes you think they can accept me in yours?"

"What did you say?"

Erik stood up and went to the window. "Nothing. It doesn't matter. Nothing about me matters. What does matter is that you heal and go on with your life, forgetting all about me."

"I shall never be able to forget you."

"You must try, Miss McKellen. Nothing about me ever turns out good. You must forget all about me and what I have done. Your breakfast is on the table."

"Aren't you going to eat?"

"No. I am not hungry. Please. I need to be alone. After you finish, you can get dressed and I will take you to a gynecologist to be examined. I could not assess any internal damage, if there was any."

Kaisty shrugged and went to the dining room to eat her breakfast. Erik took off his mask again and looked at it mockingly.

"Take it off, you say? Even though the times have changed, the people are just the same. All they see in me is a monster. Women don't usually scream anymore, but their disgust hasn't changed. I can never be loved for who I am. Christine proved that to me so many years ago. Kaisty, you are so beautiful. I dare not get close to you. I must get you away from me as soon as you are fit. I can't fall in love with you. You are . . ."

"Erik? I'm ready to go."

"I'll be with you in a minute."

Erik pulled on a clean shirt and pulled up his suspenders. he fastened his waistcoat and



pulled a black sports coat from his closet. He grabbed his hat and pulled the fedora down over his mask.

Kaisty looked beautiful. Her deep red hair flowed in curls around her face. Round-rimmed glasses framed her eyes which glowed a bright green. The Victorian shirt tucked into the snug jeans only deepened Erik's longings.

"Come with me," Erik said softly.

He led her to a private elevator. They went down several stories to a small parking garage. Erik walked up to a black Lamborghini Countach and opened the door for her.

"Is this your car?" she asked.

"They're all mine," Erik replied.

Kaisty looked around in amazement. There was every variety of exotic sports car available: Porsche 944, Ferrari Testarossa, F-40, 250 GTO, Jaguar XKE, Mercedes-Benz 320, Delorian, Corvette, Lotus, Sterling, a Phantom and many more she had never seen before--and every single vehicle was black! Even the Delorian, which was made from stainless steel. All black with blacked-out windows.

"They are just toys I picked up. I have a fascination with beautiful things. I don't even know why I have them. I seldom go out. Only when my larder is low do I venture out. This is the first time I have been out in daylight in many, many years."

"You must be a bit of a hermit."

"Yes, but by no choice of my own. I am a rich old man who has no-one to leave anything to when, and if, I die."

"How old are you?" Kaisty asked.

"Older than you think. I am not at liberty to discuss my age. Shall we go?"

"By all means."

Erik hit a button and a garage door slid open. He put the Countach into gear and headed out through the opening in the wall. They stopped at the wall as an elevator platform raised them up to street level. Kaisty looked at the building from which they had just come. It was an immense building, a full theatre filling the first seven floors.

"I have an affinity for music," Erik explained. "I had the money, so I built this theatre and my living quarters above. The theatre is on floors one through seven, the dressing rooms are on the eight floor and the actors' quarters are on the ninth through the fifteenth floors. The main offices for the theatre are on the sixteenth and seventeenth floors. I occupy the other floors. The building is twenty-

four stories tall. The parking garage is twelve levels tall.

"What's playing at your theatre now?"

"*The Phantom of the Opera*, by Lloyd Webber. I offered him special arrangements if he would transfer the show from the Majestic Theatre to this theatre. The auditorium seats 6,000 people with no partial-view seats. It is also acoustically perfect."

"You must take great pride in your theatre."

"I'd give it all up for one secret wish I have."

"What is that?" Kaisty inquired.

"I cannot say. There is no possibility of that wish ever coming true so I don't worry about it. Here is the doctor's office. I shall wait for you out here."

Erik watched Kaisty enter the office and waited for her patiently. He told himself over and over again that she would never love him and that he should forget about her as soon as she left. He felt he had a curse on him. Every woman he had ever helped, aside from Christine Daaé, had come to a terrible end. In the thirties, Carole Lombard, an actress whom he helped, died in a plane crash; Marilyn Monroe committed suicide after she saw him; Sharon Tate was murdered by Charles Manson and Rebecca Schaeffer was also killed. He didn't want Kaisty to be the next victim of his curse. In all actuality, Erik had nothing to do with the tragic deaths. They were all coincidental. Erik felt they were all his fault. He had emotions for Kaisty, but he resolved to never let them develop. Kaisty returned from her check-up and got a clean bill of health from the doctor. She slid into Erik's car and they sped away. Kaisty looked at the buildings and began singing her favorite song:

Think of me, think of me fondly  
when we've said good-bye.  
Remember me once in a while,  
please promise me you'll try.  
When you find, that once again,  
you long to take your heart back  
and be free.  
If you ever find a moment,  
spare a thought for me.

Erik stopped the car and shook behind the wheel, his body trembling uncontrollably. Kaisty looked at Erik with considerable concern.

"Is something wrong?"

Erik was unable to respond. He just sat there, shaking, for nearly twenty minutes. She



had sounded so much like Christine that it completely took Erik by surprise. He knew he had to pull over or an accident would happen. His whole body shook as he re-lived the trauma of his former life. His unmasking; her betrayal; his revenge; her revenge. All these flooded his memory at one time. He was only vaguely aware of Kaisty's concerned words. He knew that with his help, she could be a very powerful vocalist, but did he dare press his luck? Would she die as the others did? Conflicting emotions raked his soul and he had to control himself lest he lose control and begin crying in front of Kaisty. He battered the question in his mind. When he finally regained his composure, Kaisty was near frantic with fear.

"God! What did I do? What happened? Are you alright now, Erik?"

"No," he said finally. "But that is alright. Why did you not tell me you were a vocalist? The shock would have been far less."

"I'm not a vocalist. I can't sing worth a lick. I just love that song."

Erik looked at her viciously. "Damn it, girl! You have a voice like I haven't heard in nearly a cen . . . a . . . a long time! You have the voice! You have the totally pure soprano voice that pops up once or twice every century or so. You have the gift of the Angels and I intend that you should share that gift with mankind!"

Kaisty was shocked at his display. Erik was such a quiet, soft-spoken man.

"Kaisty, listen to me. You have one of the most beautiful voices I have ever heard and, believe me, I have heard the best. Now, tell me, have you had any acting experience?"

"I was in several plays in high school and college."

"Good. The girl playing 'Christine' in *Phantom* is leaving the show next month. The casting director is trying to hire a girl who has a very good voice. I can train you in your spare time, but I know they will hire you as the lead once they hear your voice. Are you game?"

"I guess so. If you say I'm really that good."

"Kaisty, you are that good. Your voice matches or excels Sarah Brightman's."

Kaisty's eyes went wide. She knew who Sarah Brightman was.

"You really think so?" she asked.

"I know so."

♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

Erik arranged a private audition with the casting directors. Just as he knew, they hired her on the spot. Kaisty began training in rehearsal the next day, learning the staging and blocking by daytime and learning the songs and dialogue by night. Erik made the perfect study partner. He sang the role of 'The Phantom' perfectly, sounding like Michael Crawford, but with a hint more passion in his voice. Despite himself, Erik began to fall deeply in love with her. She was so beautiful and tried eagerly to please him. She learned the role of 'Christine' quickly and New York audiences loved her. Erik filled her voice with passion every time she sang.

Every night, Erik ventured down to the theatre and sat in his private box and watched the show through its run. It tore him up thoroughly, tormenting him with emotions of his past life. How he longed to sing those fatal words with Kaisty. How he longed to sweep her up in his arms as the actor playing 'Raoul' did. How he wished he could have a son or daughter to live his legacy. On that night, the anniversary of that fateful night over a century ago, he gave Kaisty more passion that he had ever given before. His magic wove through her voice, purer than snow and twice as delicate. Erik had to remove his mask, for he became so emotional. It tore him up inside to give all his soul, yet he had to do it—just like how it hurt him greatly to give Christine up. He vividly remembered the night:

The moment he forced Christine to back with him to the lair, he knew he would lose her. He was bitterly in love with a woman who could not return his affections. He hid his pain with anger and rage. He feared he really would have killed the Vicomte if Christine had not done what she did—kissing him tenderly. His arms trembled violently as he tried to put his arms around her but was physically unable to do so. He held back his tears as best he could and told them to leave, never saying a word about the Angel in Hell. When he saw Christine leave with her lover, all walls broke down. Devastating sobs racked his body as he cried out to her, "I love you . . . I love you . . ." His piteous cries resounded from the cavern walls, bombarding him with his own torment. He buried his face into the wedding veil Christine had dropped. As he heard the ensuing mob, he had dragged himself to his throne and vanished. He had fled Paris, wandering from country to country, finding work where he could, making people famous and always losing in the end. He couldn't bear to lose Kaisty the same way. When the performance had ended, Erik



took himself to her dressing room. He heard Kaisty approach and then be stopped by a man.

"Hello, Miss McKellen. I had to admire your performance. You were better tonight than you were a few weeks ago."

"Excuse me? I don't seem to remember you."

The handsome young man blushed.

"Forgive me. Name's Clive Streiber. I'm the show photographer. I take snapshots at all the rehearsals when we have a major cast change. A new diva counts as a major change, and what a pleasant change it is."

"If you'll forgive me, I've got another gentleman waiting, but I'd like to talk with you again."

"Could I take you to lunch after tomorrow's matinee?"

"I'd like that very much. I know Erik won't mind."

"Mr. Erik? The theatre owner?"

"Yes, why?"

"It's just that no-one has ever seen him. He always responds by phone or by fax. No-one has ever seen him face to face."

"I guess I'm pretty privileged, huh?"

"Yeah. Well, I'll let you go, then. See you tomorrow."

Not only was he handsome, he was friendly and outgoing. But despite all the photographer was, she still liked Erik a lot. She shrugged her shoulders and returned to her dressing room. Erik was there, waiting for her. A look of deep sadness and slight distress was on his face. He spoke softly.

"You were better tonight than you have ever been."

"I owe everything to you: my voice, my career, my welfare, and my life."

"You owe me nothing. I was glad to be able to help one in need. May I ask you a candid and personal question, Kaisty?"

"Uh, sure."

"How do your feelings for me run?"

"What do you mean?"

"How . . . how . . ." Erik choked on his words.

"Erik? Are you okay?"

"Do . . . do you . . . love me, Kaisty?"

Kaisty stared at him, her eyes wide.

"Do you love me?" he repeated.

"Erik . . . do you?"

"Love you? I tried not to, but I have found it increasingly difficult not to have emotions for you. You are so beautiful. Just because I

hide myself doesn't mean I don't have feelings. I won't ply for your affection if you have no feelings for me."

"Erik. I have very strong feelings for you. I would like to consummate a relationship with you, if you would allow it. You are so kind, and strong. You have obviously had a very traumatic experience, and I want to help you put it past you, just as you have helped me overcome my traumatic experience. I couldn't have done it without you."

Erik reached into his jacket and pulled out a tiny box. Taking his hat off for the first time since they met, he looked at her shyly and gave her the box.

"Erik? For me?"

"If you want it," he replied.

Kaisty opened the box. It was a beautifully crafted ring. Intertwined roses made up the circle and on the top were two tiny half-masks filled with precious diamonds. Kaisty slipped the ring on her finger and then gazed up at Erik, for truly the first time. She was a little shocked but she still smiled lovingly. His skin was death-white, but he didn't look ill. His eyes were intensely blue, the right one, behind the mask, was several shades lighter than the left eye. His lips were grossly swollen on the right and then disappeared up under the mask. Something looked vaguely familiar about him. he smiled, too.

"Oh, Erik! It's beautiful! Am I your girl?"

"If you want to be . . . if you can bear to be."

Kaisty leaned over and kissed Erik's cheek and them embraced him.

"You may go out to lunch with the photographer tomorrow. But there's something about him I don't like. I can't put my finger on it but . . . please be careful. I'd die if anything ever happened to you."

"I'll be careful. I promise."

"That's all I ask of you," Erik chided.

♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

"Hello, Miss Daaé," Clive chided. "Another brilliant performance. I don't see how you can be perfect every time."

"I have a very good instructor."

Clive and Kaisty stepped across the street to a quaint little restaurant and had a nice lunch. Erik wanted to watch them from his penthouse, but he refused. Kaisty had to have her privacy,



just as he needed his. Kaisty was as sweet to Erik as she had ever been, but Clive began hanging around more, obviously trying for Kaisty's affection. She seemed torn between the two men, and Erik feared that, once again, he would be the losing partner. He did all he could for Kaisty, allowing her more freedom, giving her free run with his cars. Kaisty seemed more drawn to him than the handsome young photographer. Soon, though, Erik had a devastating day.

"Excuse me, Mr. Erik. We have a major problem."

"Spit it out, Mr. Bogardus."

"You know that Cris is on his honeymoon, but our usual understudy just had surgery and *his* understudy has strep throat. We have no-one to play the role of 'The Phantom'!"

Erik looked at the wall in absolute horror. Only one other person knew the role well enough to pull the show through--Erik himself. He knew that he could not allow the show to be cancelled, even if it meant losing Kaisty for good.

"Mr. Bogardus. I will be down twenty minutes before show time. I know the role straight through. The show will continue tonight. Please inform the cast of the replacement."

Erik hung up the phone and shook for a minute. Kaisty went down to get ready. Erik went to his wardrobe and opened a secret compartment. From this compartment he drew out a costume exactly like the one the actor playing 'The Phantom' wore, except Erik's outfit was vintage. He stripped to his underclothes and then began dressing. He donned the starched white shirt that buttoned between his legs, pulled up the trousers, pulled on the waistcoat and swallow-tail jacket. He pulled off the wig he normally wore and looked at the few feathery locks of dark hair on his scalp. He darkened his lips a bit and then put a base slightly darker than his natural color on his face, scalp and neck. He darkened the twisted flesh that made up his right cheek and then powdered everything. He glued the wireless microphone to his temple and once the spirit gum had dried, he slipped his wig back on. He washed his hands and then slipped the famous ring onto his finger. Donning the mask, he psyched himself up and went to his private elevator that would take him backstage. Everyone will think it is make-up you are wearing. No-one will know the truth, he told himself over and over again, just like he had before, only in front of 6,000 people this time. The elevator stopped and the door slid open. He

felt all eyes upon him. He went directly to Mr. Bogardus, the stage manager.

"Mr. Erik. You look fantastic. The true image of the Phantom."

"You don't know how right you are. We are ready to begin?"

"In two minutes."

"Start on time."

The overture began and Erik felt a rush of fear. Calm down, old boy. No-one will know!

For the first time, Erik watched Kaisty as a participant, not just as an observer. Kaisty didn't know Erik would be playing 'The Phantom', but when she heard the ever tender, hypnotic "Bravi, bravi, bravissimi" she knew it was not her usual leading man. Then when she heard 'The Phantom' sing, "Insolent boy, this slave of fashion . . ." she knew who took the regular's place and gave him all she had.

When they reached the point when 'The Phantom' gave his love to 'Christine', Erik gave his love to Kaisty. Erik played the role better than anyone because, for him, it was a rerun of his life. At intermission, Kaisty approached Erik.

"Oh, Erik! You are wonderful! I didn't think they could find anyone to play the role, let alone you! You were made for this role."

"I was made as the role," Erik said softly.

"What do you mean?"

"You'll know sooner than you wish to."

The show continued and Erik's performance opposite Kaisty was the highlight of the week. When the finale came, the point when 'Christine' kisses 'The Phantom' out of sympathy and pity, Kaisty realized something very different about Erik's make-up. With all the foam latex on the actor's face, that passionate, endearing kiss could not be felt. The latex could be felt, and it was stiff and spongy. Erik's lips, however, were very soft and yielding. They were also very warm and living. The show had three curtain calls and the standing ovation lasted long after the curtain closed. Erik didn't wait for congratulations or for Kaisty. He hastened to his private elevator and went upstairs to his apartment. Kaisty followed about half an hour later. Erik had changed his clothes and gone to bed, or so Kaisty thought. He waited until she had entered her room and turned the lights out. He then went to the kitchen and fixed his dinner, as he did every night. Kaisty heard him and watched him from behind the partition that separated the dining room from the kitchen. He set his bowl of pasta on the table and poured himself a glass of fine Chablis. He looked around



cautiously to see if Kaisty had heard him. Not finding her, he sat down in the darkened dining room and set his mask aside. He was not wearing the black fedora he had always worn in her presence. His dark, slicked hair shone in the light from the kitchen. It was full and so beautiful. Kaisty moved like a cat awaiting her pounce. She stalked up and when she was right behind him, she flipped on the light switch. Erik jumped straight out of his chair and reached quickly for the mask, but not quickly enough. Kaisty grabbed it a half-second before Erik got to her.

"Give me back my mask," he hissed.

"No. Not until I see you."

Erik whirled around. Sparks of rage flew from his glinty red eyes.

"Why haven't you taken off your make-up yet?" she asked.

"This is not make-up."

"What do you mean? I had the red on my lips as I always do after kissing 'The Phantom'."

"I put make-up on, but this--this is *not* make-up. Kaisty, look at me. This is my face--my real face. My revolting, hideous, terrible face."

"Oh, my God!" Kaisty cried as she turned away from him. Erik began weeping, softly at first, but growing louder with each sob. He turned to her, staring at the back of her red head.

"I knew you, too, would turn away from me as did the real Christine Daaé. She couldn't bear--couldn't stand--to look at me either."

Kaisty stopped and turned to look at him. Disbelief shone in her eyes.

"You can't be--it was all just a story. Wasn't it? That would make you . . . it can't be. You can't be . . . him!"

"Kaisty, I wish I wasn't him, but I am. I am the Phantom of the Opera. I am a hundred and fifty-seven years old. Mother Nature made me a freak, so her laws do not apply to me. I have not aged since the night Christine abandoned me. Now you have abandoned me too. But I am not ungrateful. You may be able to have a happy life. Since I saved your life, I suppose the curse has been broken. Every woman I have ever helped become famous, besides you and Christine, had died. Sharon Tate was the only one who really cared for me . . . and she--she was murdered. I'm glad you are leaving--I couldn't bear it if anything happened to you. But make me this promise--never tell anyone what you know about this 'Angel in Hell'. I love you,

Kaisty! I love you," he wailed.

His knees buckled and he fell to the floor, squirming at Kaisty's feet. Piteous cries came from the sobbing man. Kaisty reached out and touched his shoulder. Erik shrank back from her touch.

"Oh, Erik. I am so stupid. Please forgive me. I didn't mean to turn away. It's just so hard to believe anyone could be unfortunate enough to be born with such a disfigurement. I don't know how cruel it was to reject you. Will you come to me?"

Kaisty held her hand out to Erik. Ever so slowly, Erik raised his head and looked at her with his mismatched eyes. His hand reached hesitantly for hers. Kaisty grasped his hand firmly and gave it a gentle squeeze. Pulling him to her, she embraced the man whose sobs racked his entire body. He laid his head in her lap as Kaisty stroked his hair. His face was twisted, as was the make-up she was used to. It wasn't the gross perversion of human nature that had made her turn away, it was the realization that such a travesty existed, and to the man she loved dearly. She thought for a moment and then realized something that would make him forget the horror of his discovery and of his past failures in his attempts to have a normal life.

Kaisty slid her hands up to her blouse and began unfastening the buttons, slowly and deliberately. Erik's eyes were closed, so he didn't see Kaisty's actions. When he looked up again, he saw two perfectly formed breasts hovering over his deformed face. He was so startled, he rose up suddenly and hit one of them with his nose.

"What's wrong? Haven't you ever seen two breasts before?"

"Not on anything but a chicken. Why did you . . . disrobe?"

"That's what one normally does when she wants to make love to a man."

Erik's eyes went wide in horror as he backed into a corner. Kaisty removed her panties and walked towards him. Erik cowered in the corner, terrified by the beautiful woman.

"Don't you want to make love to me?"

"That is what I want more than anything else in the world--but I couldn't. I couldn't foul your pure body with my poison. I am much too hideous."

Kaisty spread his knees apart and rested her ample breasts on his thighs. "You are the only man I ever want to join with. I turned from you because I couldn't believe the horrors you



have had to face. You are so masculine and perfect, to me. I would be dead if it hadn't been for you. This is my way of saying thank you, on a more, ahem, intimate level. Are you with me?"

"I have never lain--slept--done anything with a woman before. I don't know what to do, or how to do it right. What if I hurt you? What if I couldn't . . ."

"You can. I felt it when I kissed you on the stage. Yours is right on key."

She peeled away his stiff white shirt and his undershirt. Trousers and shorts dropped to the floor and Erik shivered with anticipation. Kaisty ran her fingers along his collarbone and down to the unruly curls of hair that garnished his breast. His nipples firmed under her touch. He was responding very well and would be a very active partner. She kissed his forehead and worked her way down his right cheek, her lips working over the scars and crevasses, until she met his lips. She parted them with her tongue and probed the tender depths of his misshapen mouth. When she finished with his mouth, she continued down his neck and chest. She ran her tongue down the center of his stomach and stopped at his navel. Her hands ran his front to the groin. He was responding better than she had hoped. He was beginning to get worked up, agitation and eagerness trembling all over his body. Kaisty led him to the bed and felt his weight press against her as he lowered them to the bed. Kaisty only needed to give him a few instructions and never had to guide him at all. They fitted together so well. Kaisty groaned in pleasure as Erik worked off a century of lust and desire. The throbbing tingle intensified and she emitted pleasurable sounds, which Erik joined. Kaisty worked him hard and enjoyed herself immensely. She, too, had not had a sexual experience since the night she had been raped. She had never thought to have sex again, until she saw Erik lying in her lap, so delicious and desirable. They had both needed this joining. For a short eternity, Erik and Kaisty tussled and turned, joined in the rhapsody of their own music. Erik had a very strong rhythm and Kaisty felt a rush from each thrust of Erik's groin. he was very exhilarating. They finally collapsed in a heap, Erik still inside her, too drained to continue. Sweat glistened from both of them and the bed was soaked with semen and sweat. Kaisty had not used any type of birth control and Erik had not thought about it. From the amounts displayed, Kaisty hoped that this night of passion would bear forth their child. Despite the grisly

carnage of Erik's face, she loved the man very much and wanted to spend the rest of her life with him.

"Erik," Kaisty sighed. "Did you enjoy yourself?"

"Enjoy? Enjoy?" he panted. "It was the most wonderful experience I have ever had. In fact, it was the *only* wonderful experience I have ever had. You are a good tutor. I love you."

"I love you too, Erik. I always knew I loved you. Tomorrow, I shall tell Clive that I cannot see him again, and that I am getting married."

"You would marry me?"

"I would indeed. That was the best sex I've ever had. And besides, you are a very sexy senior citizen, and I plan to make you the happiest man alive."

Erik's lips twisted into a grotesque smile and he laughed.

"Did I just hear you laugh?" Kaisty asked.

"Yes! I did laugh. I can laugh!"

Erik and Kaisty changed beds and fell into a peaceful, contented slumber.

♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

"I can't see you anymore, Clive. Erik and I are getting married."

"You can't marry *him*," Clive spat with disgust and hatred. "That deformed bastard. You are going to marry me!"

"I am not going to marry you, Clive. I happen to love that 'deformed bastard'. He's got more beauty in his little finger than you have in your entire body."

Clive grabbed Kaisty's wrists.

"Clive, let me go. You're hurting me!"

"I'm gonna do a lot more than hurt your wrists, sweet thing. You remember me, sweetie pie? You and that freak thought I was dead, didn't you. You f---ing whore! I'm gonna take pleasure in making you die very slowly . . . and painfully."

Clive punched Kaisty and knocked her out. he dragged her prone form to his car and sped off, heading for the Canadian border. Erik began to worry when Kaisty didn't return when she said she was going to be back. He thought she had abandoned him. The night passed and then he was certain she had left him for the young, suave man. Then the letter arrived. It was hastily scrawled and barely readable:



Erik.

Have been kidnapped by Clive. Heading towards Canada on Route 390. He's the one who attacked . . . the alley. Knows who you are . . . not Phantom, though. He means to kill me. Hurry, or will be too late.

Kaisty

Erik needed no further information. He raced to his garage and pulled out the Countach. Racing up the route Kaisty had told him they were heading along, he called the state police and told them of the kidnapping. They confirmed a sighting and set up roadblocks all along the highways. The police made an effort to tell all officers not to pull over the speeding black Lamborghini. Erik sighted the car Clive drove and pulled up right behind them. Clive knew the car and sped up, but his Mustang was no match for the Countach's V-12 engine. He swerved all over the road, forbidding Erik's attempts to pass them. The Mustang strained under the stress of the evasive driving and a tire blew. Clive lost control of the car and it flipped over. Erik screamed and screeched the car to a halt. Paying no heed to his mask, cloak, or hat, he rushed to the car, which was now in flames. He flung the passenger door open with all his strength. He pulled Kaisty from the car as he vaguely heard Clive's pitiful cries to free him also. He ignored the man and yanked Kaisty from the car just as Clive's clothing caught fire. Erik threw Kaisty across his shoulders and bolted from the car just split second before it exploded. The force sent them reeling. Erik lay over Kaisty's prone form as several squad cars, fire trucks and an ambulance arrived on the scene. Murmurs came from the crowd of officers as they saw the hideous man weeping over the body of the beautiful young woman. He refused to stray from her side and rode in the ambulance with her as an officer drove the expensive sports car behind them.

"How long has he been sitting there," a doctor asked.

"Since the girl came in . . . about four hours ago."

"God! He must really love the girl."

"With a face such as that," the nurse replied, "he needs all the love he can get."

Indeed, Erik had either sat or stood just outside the emergency room for over four hours. He knew Kaisty was dead. He felt sick in his heart. She died, and it's all my fault. Why

couldn't I just leave her alone?

"Mr. Erik? I'm Dr. Brannigan."

"She's dead," Erik sighed softly.

"I beg your pardon?"

"She's dead, isn't she?"

"Good Heavens! Is that what you thought? No, no, no. They're both fine."

"They?!?"

"Your wife is fine and the embryo is fine.

You are going to be a father. She's awake and asking for you."

Erik rushed into the room and knelt by her side.

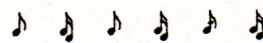
"Erik," she sighed. "I knew you'd come."

"Is it true what the doctor said? Are we . . .?"

"Yes. We're going to have a baby. The embryo is only a couple of days old, but the doctor said all is fine with the baby. You must have thought that I left you."

"Please forgive me! I should have known better. Oh, Kaisty! I love you!"

"I love you more," she said through a slight smile.



As the months passed, Kaisty's belly grew larger and larger. Erik would sometimes think his happiness was all a dream--that he would wake up at any moment and Kaisty and his child would dissolve into mist--but all he had to do was run his hand over Kaisty's swollen abdomen to assure himself that it was definitely *not* a dream. That was his baby in there. One day, as he rested his hand on the large, round midsection, the baby kicked out and Erik felt a tremor of joy and excitement. When Kaisty came to term, she was absolutely huge. She referred to herself as 'The Singing Whale'. During the pregnancy, she had gained a good fifty pounds. Then, on April 16th--Erik's birthday--Kaisty went into labor. After thirteen hours in labor, Kaisty delivered twins, a boy and a girl, both healthy and beautiful. The boy had dark hair, thick and full, like Erik's had been when he was young, and the girl had the fiery red hair that marked her mother's head. The boy, Christopher Erik, had bright blue eyes and a beautiful smile. Madeleine, the girl, had bright blue eyes as well--one light and one dark--the only legacy of Erik's deformities.

Kaisty didn't lose any of the weight she gained during her pregnancy. She was buxom but still alluringly beautiful. Erik was thinking



wistfully one night as Kaisty and the twins all lay in his lap, sleeping peacefully.

"Christine, I don't mourn for you anymore. I have, at last, found the happiness you could not give me. I know you were happy in your choice, and I am now happy in mine. It may have taken me a hundred and eleven years to find that happiness, but it is mine at last."

And up in Heaven, a single entity smiled on him, thanking him for her second chance, and grateful that he got his.





# CLASSIFIED ADS

## BOOKS

"The Phantom of the Opera" by Gaston Leroux. {\$3.95}

New Translation by Lowell Blair. A must for those who find passages difficult to read. {\$3.95}

Audio book read by F. Murray Abraham. An excellently told version. Music by W.G. Hirtz. {\$15.95}

"The Complete P.T.O." by George Perry. Features a history of the Paris Opéra, a bio of Leroux, a synopsis of the original story, various movie versions, background and the libretto of the play. Illustrated. {\$24.95}

Phantom Pop-up Book. Features scenes from the play. Musical microchip plays theme song and lights candles. {\$19.95}

"A.L.W.: His Life & Works" by H. Abrams & M. Walsh. An in-depth look at Webber's works. {\$39.95}

"Phantoms"—edited by Martin & Rosalind Greenberg. A collection of short Phantom stories. {\$3.95}

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## PERSONAL ADS

Male, 47, seeks meaningful relationship with someone who cares not what one looks like on the outside. Likes music, theatre, pyrotechnics and boating. Is single and desperate for a good woman. Send inquiries to Opéra Ghost c/o Paris Opéra.

**WANTED:** Poetry, artwork, short stories, letters, articles, columns, etc. on "The Phantom of the Opéra". We take almost anything. Send it care of the Ghost by return of post to: PHANTOM Magazine.

**LOST:** 1 masked composer in tails. Lost in vicinity of the Paris Opéra. Reward upon return. Deliver to Christine De Leaubois, Countess de Marcielles, Château de Marcielles, Paris.

Is anyone planning to go to London to see "Phantom" between now and 5-91? I am looking for a partner to get a special deal on American Airlines. Send inquiries to: Julie Blewett

724 North Roeske Avenue  
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Especially anxious to see Dave Willets, who is (rumored) back.

**WANTED:** Souvenir booklet from Los Angeles. Will pay up front or C.O.D. or upon receipt. Anxiously awaiting response—Julie Blewett.

## PHANTOM Magazine's Essay Contest

PHANTOM Magazine is sponsoring a contest to see who is the most popular Phantom and why. Entering is easy. Simply fill out the form below (or a reasonable facsimile), paper clip it to your essay and mail it to: **Phantom Contest #1\***. Our judges will pick the best five entries. Entries will be judged on content, style, continuity, logic and sincerity. Five prizes will be awarded. First prize: Hand-painted "Phantom" sweatshirt. 2nd & 3rd: "Phantom" stationery. 4th & 5th: 1 free year subscription to PHANTOM Magazine. All entries due by September 15, 1990. Winners will be announced in October's issue. One entry per person. \*Essays are to be no longer than 25 double-spaced, typed pages.

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SUBMISSION \_\_\_\_\_

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1997



IT'S OUR OWN STAFF ARTIST  
(ACTUALLY, OUR WHOLE STAFF)

**J. BLEWETT**



OH, NO!  
IT'S THE PHANTOM OF THE BLACK BASSOON!

WHO IS THIS WITH  
THE RAISINETTE?



WHY, IT'S *PHANTOM* NOTES OWN  
BONNIE BILLS  
- HI, BONNIE! -

### ANSWERS TO THE PHANTOM'S WORD SEARCH

H	A	F	X	B	S	V	I	O	L	I	N	C	G	S	Y	O	C	A
D	E	Q	M	F	B	T	A	G	K	F	U	W	U	M	M	T	R	I
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A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
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A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
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A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C	R
A	E	S	J	B	Z	I	A	G	I	O	F	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	G	I
D	A	E	X	M	L	A	E	K	E	H	T	R	E	G	R	A	C</	





The music plays, eerily and strange, as dances begin all around. Colors swirl and dance to the rhythms beat out on bizarre drums. Cymbals crash and violins intone lyric and melodic sounds, adding to the macabre display. Faces leer around every corner, hide behind every pillar in the great Gothic hall. Every kind of creature and every sort of fool can be found. Flashes of blue, scarlet, gold; all the colors of a thousand rainbows flooded the eye, and a sea of smiles surrounded everything. Paper faces are on parade. Who is that? What are you? Name the face behind the mask, if you can . . . if you dare. It is the beast's night out. Monkeys, bulls, roosters and golden eagles adorn the great staircase, warning all and none. Skeletons and monsters turning burning glances as they try to keep their identities secret. Amidst this ghastly party lies one whose intentions are not gay, not happy, but sinister and diverse. Wearing a scarlet costume from head to foot, he stands atop the great staircase. A great, pearly-white head of Death sits beneath the plumed crimson hat. Great red eyes burn in the skull. He sports a long, red cloak garnished with, in great big golden letters, "DO NOT TOUCH ME! I AM THE RED DEATH STALKING ABROAD!" He strides up the silver ballerina and her soldier. Glaring at them furiously, he cries out, "Your chains are still MINE! You will sing for ME!" A chain around the girl's neck is fiercely torn off and the Red Death vanishes before the crowd's astonished eyes. This will be last New Year's Eve Masquerade Ball that anyone will be able to forget. Masquerade! Hide your face so the world will never find you.





# Erik's Place





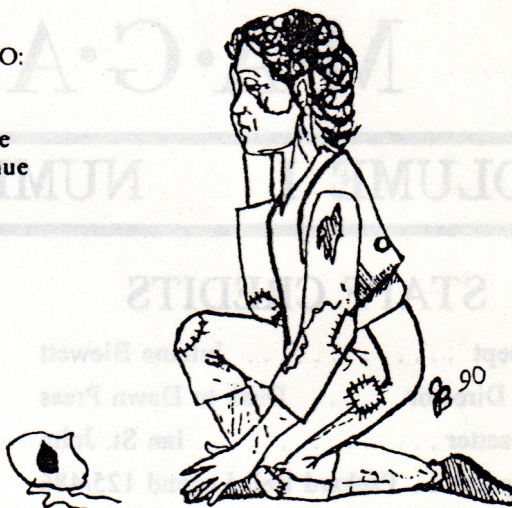
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